



United States  
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Inspection Service

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# FSIS Constituent Update

Protecting Public Health Through Food Safety and Food Defense

## OPM Extends Direct Hiring Authority for Veterinary Medical Officers

On February 12, the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) gave all federal agencies broader discretion to use VMO Direct-Hire Authority (DHA), allowing agencies to recruit and place all new Veterinarians without regard to individual rankings and “veterans’ preference.”

The Agency’s previous request for Veterinary Medical Officer (VMO) DHA was approved by OPM last year. However, the authority was time-limited and had a ceiling on the total number of hires that could be made. The Agency was also required to document a shortage of candidates each time it used this flexibility.

While the previous authority was helpful, the expanded DHA will be of greater assistance to FSIS. The Agency has pursued a variety of hiring flexibilities and authorities to address recruitment difficulties, and obtaining this more flexible direct-hiring

authority will further assist the Agency in filling vacancies for some of the most critical, hard-to-fill locations.

This new DHA incorporates positions nationwide, including overseas territories and commonwealths of Puerto Rico, Guam and the Virgin Islands.

OPM will review the delegation on a periodic basis to determine if continued use is supportable.



FSIS still must ensure that pre-employment background checks and security requirements are fully met. OPM has also requested that all Agencies continue to make employment offers to qualified candidates with veterans’ preference whenever possible.

Work is underway to more effectively spotlight Veterinarian

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## Export Requirement Updates



The Library of Export Requirements has been updated to reflect changes in export requirements for the following:

### European Union

Complete information can be found at [www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations\\_&Policies/Export\\_Information/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&Policies/Export_Information/index.asp).

### FSIS Issues Notices

FSIS issues notices to enhance the Agency's efforts in protecting public health. The following policy updates were issued this week:

- Notice 17-09, *Alternative Methods for Ensuring 12 Percent Lean Tissues in Meat Trimmings*.
- Notice 18-09, *Changes in Sampling Frequency for E. Coli O157:H7 Testing in Raw Ground Beef*.

All notices are available on FSIS' Web site, [www.fsis.usda.gov/regulations\\_&policies/regulations\\_directives\\_&notices/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/regulations_&policies/regulations_directives_&notices/index.asp).

## "How To" Workshop ...

*Continued from page one*

positions on USAJobs. Also, in an effort to attract more candidates, OPM plans to work with FSIS to streamline and improve the vacancy announcement for entry-level VMO positions.

For additional information, you may contact Thomas Reimler at (612) 659-8593 or [Thomas.Reimler@fsis.usda.gov](mailto:Thomas.Reimler@fsis.usda.gov), and Evelyn McGovern at (202) 720-5090 or [Evelyn.McGovern@fsis.usda.gov](mailto:Evelyn.McGovern@fsis.usda.gov).

## Register for FSIS "How To" Workshops for Small and Very Small Plants

The Agency is hosting a series of "how to" workshops to provide practical tools and methods for proper application and compliance.

These outreach workshops will cover various information on Specified Risk Materials (SRMs), developing controls for *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter*, establishing effective sanitation practices, developing food defense plans, ensuring humane handling of livestock and conducting product recalls.

Visit [www.fsis.usda.gov/News\\_&Events/Outreach\\_Sessions\\_SVS\\_Plants/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&Events/Outreach_Sessions_SVS_Plants/index.asp) to register for a workshop. Individuals may also register by phone at 1-800-336-3747. Pre-registration is not required but it is highly encouraged.

<p><b>March 16</b>  <b>Dallas, Texas</b>            7:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.            Crowne Plaza Suites            Dallas Park Central            7800 Alpha Road            (Sanitation Practices)</p>	<p><b>March 17</b>  <b>Dallas, Texas</b>            1:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.            Crowne Plaza Suites            Dallas Park Central            7800 Alpha Road            (Recalls)</p>
<p><b>March 19</b>  <b>Raleigh, North Carolina</b>            7:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.            Holiday Inn Carey            5630 Dillard Drive            (Developing Controls)</p>	

## Register for FSIS Regulatory Education Workshop

On March 21, FSIS will hold a regulatory education workshop in California for owners and operators of small and very small plants.

The workshop will cover a variety of topics and prerequisite programs, including hazard analysis and critical control points, sanitation performance standards, sanitation standard operating procedures, rules of practice, food defense strategies and *E. coli*.

The March 21 session will be held at the Radisson in West Covina, 1211 East Garvey Street, Covina, California from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Online registration forms and information about upcoming sessions can be found at [www.fsis.usda.gov/News\\_&\\_Events/Registration\\_Regulatory\\_Ed\\_Sessions/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/Registration_Regulatory_Ed_Sessions/index.asp). Pre-registration is encouraged, but not required.



## National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Foods to Hold Public Meetings

FSIS announced this week that the National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Foods (NACMCF) will hold public meetings from March 16 to 20 in Washington, D.C.

The committee will discuss options of the most appropriate technologies for FSIS to adopt in performing routine and baseline microbiological analyses, and parameters for inoculated pack-challenge study protocols.

The subcommittee on Determination of the Most Appropriate Technologies for FSIS to Adopt in Performing Routine and Baseline Microbiological Analyses will hold open meetings on the following days:

- March 16 - 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- March 17 - 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- March 18 - 8:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.

The subcommittee on Parameters for Inoculated Pack-Challenge

Study Protocols will hold open meetings on:

- March 18 - 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- March 19 - 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

All subcommittee meetings will meet at the Aerospace Center, 901 D Street, S.W., Rooms 369-371, Washington, D.C.

The full committee will meet on March 20 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the conference room at the south end of the cafeteria located in the USDA South Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C.

For further information, contact Karen Thomas-Sharp at (202) 690-6620 or [Karen.Thomas-Sharp@fsis.usda.gov](mailto:Karen.Thomas-Sharp@fsis.usda.gov). Persons requiring a sign language interpreter or other special accommodations should notify Mrs. Thomas-Sharp by March 9.

### Updates on FSIS Testing for *E. coli* O157:H7

Weekly updates for the Agency's raw beef *E. coli* sampling program are posted to FSIS' Web site.

For comparative 2008 and 2009 results, go to [www.fsis.usda.gov/Science/Ground\\_Beef\\_E.Coli\\_Testing\\_Results/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Science/Ground_Beef_E.Coli_Testing_Results/index.asp).